

FIRST REPORT

FROM THE

SELECT COMMITTEE

APPOINTED

TO INQUIRE INTO THE AMOUNT OF ADVANCES

MADE BY THE

COMMISSIONERS

OF

PUBLIC WORKS IN IRELAND.

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
26 June 1835.

Martis, 17^o die Martii, 1835.

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the Amount of Advances made by the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland, the Regulations under which they were made, the Purposes to which they have been applied, and the Amount of Repayments; to consider also the various Reports made by Committees and Commissioners on the subject of reclaiming Waste Lands in Ireland, and to what extent the suggestions which they contain have been complied with.

And a Committee is appointed, of—

Mr. Lynch.
Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.
Sir Henry Hardinge.
Mr. Spring Rice.
Sir Henry Parnell.
Sir Thomas Fremantle.
Mr. O'Connell.
Sir Richard Musgrave.
Mr. Wyse.
Mr. Morgan J. O'Connell.
Colonel Conolly.
Colonel Perceval.
Mr. Feargus O'Connor.
Mr. William Smith O'Brien.
Mr. James Loch.
Mr. Poulett Scrope.
O'Connor Don.

Mr. Anthony Lefroy.
Mr. James Grattan.
Mr. Robert Clive.
Lord Viscount Clements.
Sir Charles Coote.
Mr. Lowther Chapman.
Colonel Bruen.
Mr. Thomas Gladstone.
Earl of Kerry.
Sir Robert Bateson.
Mr. Bodkin.
Mr. Blake.
Mr. Christopher Fitzsimon.
Lord Viscount Castlereagh.
Mr. William Roche.
Mr. Sheil.

Ordered, That the said Committee have power to send for Persons, Papers and Records.

Ordered, That Five be the Quorum of the Committee.

Jovis, 19^o die Martii, 1835.

Ordered, That Mr. Mullins be added to the Committee.

Veneris, 27^o die Martii, 1835.

Ordered, That Sir Charles Lemon, Mr. Nicholl, Mr. Robert Palmer, Mr. Cumming Bruce, Mr. Jephson, Mr. Cornelius O'Brien and Mr. French, be added to the Committee.

Laetæ, 13^o die Aprilis, 1835.

Ordered, That Mr. Feargus O'Connor and Colonel Perceval be discharged from further attendance on the Committee.

Ordered, That Sir William Brabazon and Mr. Dominick Browne be added to the Committee.

Martis, 19^o die Maii, 1835.

Ordered, That Lord Viscount Morpeth, Lord Viscount Acheson, Major Macnamara, Mr. Edward Ruthven, Mr. Thomas Martin, Mr. Benjamin Smith and Mr. Bellew, be added to the Committee.

Jovis, 4^o die Junii, 1835.

Ordered, That Mr. Barron and Mr. David Roche be added to the Committee.

Veneris, 26^o die Junii, 1835.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to report from time to time, together with the Minutes of Evidence taken before them.

FIRST REPORT.

THE SELECT COMMITTEE appointed to inquire into the AMOUNT of ADVANCES made by the COMMISSIONERS of PUBLIC WORKS in *Ireland*, the Regulations under which they were made, the Purposes to which they have been applied, and the AMOUNT of REPAYMENTS; to consider also the various Reports made by Committees and Commissioners on the subject of reclaiming WASTE LANDS in *Ireland*, and to what extent the suggestions which they contain have been complied with;—and to Report from time to time to The House, together with the MINUTES of the EVIDENCE taken before them:—HAVE proceeded in the inquiries directed to be made, and have agreed to the following, being their FIRST REPORT:

THE Advantages derivable to Ireland and the United Kingdom from Public Works, having been heretofore frequently investigated for the information of The House and His Majesty's Government, Your Committee have been materially aided by the results of those investigations, and have limited their inquiries through individual Witnesses, as much as possible, to such persons acquainted with Irish affairs as they have found in London for other purposes, thereby restricting the expenses attendant on summoning witnesses from Ireland. They have also been considerably assisted by the annual Reports made by the Commissioners of the Board of Public Works in Ireland.

CONSTITUTION AND DUTIES OF THE BOARD.

The Irish Board of Public Works was constituted in 1831, by the Act 1 & 2 Will. IV. c. 33, and has been charged by the provisions thereof with the execution of the following objects:

1st. The management of a Fund of £.500,000, placed at its disposal, under the sanction of His Majesty's Treasury, for Loans in aid of Public Works, and individual outlay, for the purposes mentioned in the Act.

2d. The management of a Fund of £.50,000, for Grants in aid of the formation of Roads and Bridges, and small Piers and Harbours along the sea-coast.

3d. Inland Navigation.

4th. The Fisheries of Ireland, formerly under the superintendence of the late Directors General of Inland Navigation.

5th. Certain Roads and Bridges under the Act of the 6th Geo. IV. c. 101.

The Board consists of a Chairman and two Commissioners: the former and one of the latter have been military engineers, and the other a member of the late Board for auditing Army Accounts in Ireland; assisted by a Secretary, an Accountant, an Engineer, and a very moderate establishment of Clerks. This Board superseded five Boards, which had existed in Ireland previously to 1831,—the Board of Works for Dublin, the Board of Inland Navigation, a Board for lending Money from the Consolidated Fund, the Commissioners of Kingstown Harbour, and the Commissioners of Dunmore Harbour; and one of these Boards, that for Inland Navigation, had previously transferred to it the duties of a Board for promoting the Irish Fisheries. The whole annual expense of these Boards was nearly £.10,000. The actual annual expense of the establishment of the present Board of Public Works is £.5,500.

The following additional duties to those specified in the Act, have been committed to the present Board by his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, or by particular Acts :—

The charge of the Public Buildings in Dublin and the Phoenix Park.

Dunmore Harbour.

Kingstown Harbour.

Lunatic Asylums.

With many others of extensive but more temporary nature.

The charge of the Board's establishment, viz. £.5,500 per annum is defrayed out of the profit obtained by interest payable on Loans beyond the cost to Government.

LOANS.

When a loan is sanctioned by the Board of Works and the Lords of the Treasury in pursuance of the Act, advances are made on account of it; Exchequer Bills to the amount being handed to the party, who receives the premium, if any, arising on them.

The Board is authorized to lend money, with the sanction of the Treasury, to

Grand Juries,
Public Bodies,
Companies,
And Individuals ;

For any of the following purposes :

Roads and Bridges,
Harbours,
Piers,
Docks,
Canals and Railways,
Mines and Quarries,
Drainage and Improvement of Estates,
Buildings, or other description of Public Works.

And by an Act of 1834, it was directed that the Board should advance £.100,000 to the Commissioners appointed under the Act of 1833, for managing Church Temporalities in Ireland.

The Act requires the loans made to Grand Juries to be on the security of presentments for levying the amount by half-yearly instalments of not less than £.10 per cent. per annum, of the sums lent, with an annual interest not exceeding £.5 per cent.

And

And loans for public works are to be made on the security of "the rates, rents, tolls, profits and receipts," repayable in twenty-five years by instalments, commencing immediately or (if the Board of Works and Lords of the Treasury shall so determine) in five years after the date of the first advance made on account of each loan, with interest at a rate not less than £.4 per cent. per annum, on the balance remaining due, payable annually. It is required in all these cases, except as to public bodies acting under the authority of an Act of Parliament, and where no dividend or profit is payable thereout to any person or persons, that "the rates, rents, tolls, profits and receipts" on the security of which a loan shall be made, shall be in amount at least double the interest required by the Board on the sum proposed to be advanced, or where no Tolls are in existence, that a sum not less than one-third part of the estimated costs should be expended, subscribed, or be secured or deposited to the satisfaction of the Commissioners.

And loans to *individuals* for drainage or other improvement of estates (which are limited to cases where it shall be proved to the Board that the works, when completed, will increase the value of the land at least £.10 per cent. on the sum proposed to be expended) are required to be repaid within three years after the expiration of the period to be fixed by the Board of Works for the completion of the improvement, with interest, payable half-yearly, of not less than £.5 per cent. per annum. It is necessary that a contract, in all cases of borrowing for such improvements, with two sureties, shall be entered into for the full and complete execution of the work within a period to be fixed by the Board not exceeding seven years.

With respect to all loans, the securities to the Board are to have priority over existing securities, if four-fifths in value of the incumbrancers agree, but not otherwise.

Securities are authorized to be taken in deposits or transfers of Bank or Government Stock, Exchequer Bills or India Bonds, in lieu of the other securities specified in the Act, or as collateral thereto.

And they are authorized to take personal security as a collateral security, and also to make loans, not exceeding £.1,000 for one work, on personal security alone, provided the parties shall have previously expended, subscribed, secured or deposited, a sum equal to one-half of the estimated cost of the proposed work; such loans to be repayable within five years from the advance thereof, with interest of not less than £.5 per cent. per annum, payable half-yearly. The total of loans on personal security only cannot exceed £.50,000 at any one time.

By the 18th section of the Act, it is provided, that all persons, public bodies or companies (except Grand Juries) borrowing money under the Act, or becoming security for others, shall, besides the securities in each case respectively directed to be taken, become bound to His Majesty, by writing, obligatory in such penal sum as shall be directed by the Commissioners; and by the 48th section, power is given to the Company to sue Proprietors or Shareholders of unfinished works for money to complete the same, in case the expense exceeds the estimate.

The amount of loans approved by the Board of Works, some of which are not definitively sanctioned, is £.497,170. 18s. The amount of the loans sanctioned is £.351,770. 18s. The amount of advances made on account of such loans (being in Exchequer Bills) is £.195,250:

And there is as yet to be lent, supposing all the loans approved of shall be sanctioned, and of which there is little doubt, only £.2,829. 2s. This residue is the sole amount for which the Board of Works can at present entertain applications.

All the loans already approved or sanctioned, except the loan of the £.100,000, have been agreed to on the terms and regulations specified in the Act. The loans to Grand Juries have been made, in many cases, subject only to interest at £.4 per cent. per annum, under the discretionary power vested by the Act in the Lords of the Treasury and the Board; and the loan of £.100,000 to the Commissioners of Church Temporalities has been made according to the terms of the Act of 1834; a loan entirely foreign to the purposes of the Act, and to the repayment of which, within a short period, Your Committee look with anxious solicitude.

The following statement of the objects for which loans have been obtained has been laid before the Committee by the Chairman of the Board:—

OBJECTS.	AMOUNTS.		
	£.	s.	d.
Roads - - - - -	79,698	4	10
Bridges - - - - -	49,412	13	2
Navigations - - - - -	29,160	-	-
Harbours and Quays - - - - -	111,950	-	-
Railways - - - - -	80,000	-	-
Quarries and Culm-pit - - - - -	9,500	-	-
Mines (Machinery) - - - - -	2,000	-	-
Drainage - - - - -	2,200	-	-
Court House - - - - -	5,000	-	-
Hospital - - - - -	2,500	-	-
Chapels (completing) - - - - -	750	-	-
Dublin Wide-Streets - - - - -	25,000	-	-
Ecclesiastical Commissioners - - - - -	100,000	-	-
	£. 497,170	18	-

Of these loans the sum of £. 10,850 has been appropriated to individuals at the rate of £.5 per cent. per annum; and of that sum £.350 has been appropriated on personal security only.

The *Interest* on all the loans has in general been regularly paid; and it has been stated in evidence before the Committee, by Colonel Burgoyne, the Chairman of the Board, that the securities taken for the *Principal*, conformably to the terms of the Act, are such as to give hopes, as far as can be at present foreseen, of the repayment of the whole sum appropriated.

There has been already received, on account of the *Principal*, the sum of £. 20,796. 19. 10., being, with two very trifling exceptions, all that has fallen due according to the terms of the loans.

GRANTS.

In addition to the power of lending Exchequer Bills to the amount of £.500,000, the Board of Works and Lords of the Treasury are empowered by the Act to make grants in aid of the construction of roads and bridges, and of small harbours, piers and quays, on the sea-coast, to the amount of £. 50,000 out of the Consolidated Fund.

The

The Act requires the parties (excepting Grand Juries) who shall obtain such grants, to enter into the securities which shall be agreed upon, and pay a moiety of the estimated expense of the works, either in instalments or to the amount of the moiety, as the Board and Lords of the Treasury shall direct; and corporations, tenants in tail, and other persons having only particular or life interests, may mortgage their lands for raising such moiety, with priority over all charges and incumbrances.

The Board is also authorized to receive applications from Grand Juries for grants for Roads and Bridges; and the Grand Juries are authorized to raise their moiety of the contributions.

But no power is given to Grand Juries, or to individuals having only particular or life interests in lands, to raise or charge the moiety of contributions for small harbours, piers and quays.

In all cases of grants for small harbours, piers and quays, they must be situate on the sea-coast. And in all cases it is required that security shall be given that the person or persons making application shall defray such further sum beyond the estimated expense as shall be necessary to complete the road, bridge, quay or pier, according to the specification; and Grand Juries are required to defray the whole of such increased expenditure.

Of the whole amount of grants authorized, the sum of £. 32,708. 6. 2. has been appropriated to the following objects:

Grants for Roads	-	-	-	-	£. 30,067	12	2
" Bridge	-	-	-	-	2,222	14	-
" Piers and Quay	-	-	-	-	418	-	-
					£. 32,708	6	2

By an Act passed in the last Session of Parliament, the Commissioners are directed to expend the sum of £. 7,000 and upwards in the rebuilding of Portumna Bridge, on the Shannon, leaving at the disposal of the Board the sum of £. 10,000, or thereabouts only.

Among the remedial measures proposed for the improvement of Ireland, none can create less difference of opinion, or has been more universally urged by all parties and persons who have considered the subject, than the propriety of encouraging the execution of Public Works; and Your Committee fully coincide in the opinion, that there is every reason in justice and policy for extending in that country the public aid for such purpose, in a degree that does not admit of comparison with the considerations that would be the guide for other parts of the United Kingdom.

In advocating, however, on principle, a liberal support to such objects, Your Committee are fully aware of the necessity for a due consideration of the available means and resources of the Empire, which must restrict any positive national outlay within moderate bounds.

Your Committee are of opinion, however, that by legislative regulation, aid and encouragement, much good may be effected with a trifling gratuitous expense; by lending largely the support of the Government to the forwarding of Loans for works of ascertained public utility and on good security, and by making grants to a moderate extent for the prosecution of other objects of improvement of national importance beyond the means of individuals or of local communities, and in which they have no very immediate interest.

The Act of 1 & 2 William IV. cap. 33. was drawn up with these views, and Your Committee are happy to testify to the ability with which it was devised, as an improvement on every preceding system.

By concentrating the operations of various Boards, all more or less connected with Public Works, it gave the opportunity of regulating them with more economy and effect.

Establishments were much reduced, while greater and more efficient means became generally available.

The experiment has so far succeeded, and the funds are nearly exhausted. Your Committee strongly recommend an extension of the measure, with such modifications as experience has pointed out to be desirable.

In the course of the Inquiry made by Your Committee into the proceedings of the Board of Works, in applying the money placed at its disposal for loans and grants, various statements have been made, of the great advantages arising from these aids, as well as of advantages obstructed by the strictness of the terms by which the Act limits the Board and the Treasury in making loans and grants; and many suggestions of means for extending those advantages and removing those obstructions, with plans for the improvement of Ireland, by extending the powers and control of the Board of Works, have also been made to Your Committee, some of which Your Committee shall now proceed to place before The House, in the order of the respective objects of the Board's constitution to which they refer. In so doing, Your Committee do not conceive they are transgressing the limits and objects of the inquiry directed by The House.

AS TO THE EXPENSES OF THE BOARD.

It appears by the evidence of Colonel Burgoyne (652.), that the expenses of the establishment of the Board of Public Works in Ireland are defrayed by the profits on the loans; and as these expenses amount at present to upwards of £. 5,000 a year (654.), and may become greater, and as more than one-half of the duties performed by the Board are not within the Act (655.), it has been suggested, that, under the circumstances of Ireland which have required the adoption of this system of relief, it would be reasonable to recommend that the expenses of the Board shall not be charged on the loans; and as there is an annual appropriation of £.5,000 out of the Scotch Revenue, by Act of Parliament, for Public Works in Scotland (48 & 82.), which defrays the expenses of management in that country, and leaves a residue of £. 3,000 in aid of the Works (61.), Your Committee agree in the propriety and policy of this suggestion, and recommend it to the consideration of The House.

AS TO THE CONTROLLING POWERS OF THE BOARD.

Colonel Burgoyne has stated to the Committee that it would be important to give the Board of Works, under the direction of the Lords of the Treasury, a control over the County Surveyors employed by the Grand Juries, as they at present act independently (726.), and it would be for the advantage of the country that they should act on a uniform system in the execution of their duties, and under competent direction. He has also suggested that each Grand Jury (739.) should report to the Board of Works on the progress of all Public Works carrying on under its authority, for the purpose of enabling the Board of Works to ascertain the extent of all the operations of that kind going on throughout the country. Your Committee recommend both suggestions to the consideration of The House.

The

The attention of Your Committee has been directed, in the course of their inquiry, to a defect in the working of the Grand Jury system, as to the construction of new lines of roads passing through distinct counties. By an Act of Parliament passed in 1805, the Postmaster-General is empowered to have surveys made of mail roads that shall be considered desirable, which he then recommends to the Grand Jury; and he has a power, for one year, under an Act of 1834, of causing repairs to be made on mail roads, through the Board of Public Works. With reference to these powers, and the defect above referred to, it is deemed important to direct the attention of The House to the following statements in the Evidence.

451. "Col. *Burgoyne*.—I think some occasional compulsory power on the Grand Jury would be very desirable for forwarding public improvements in roads. I know of cases where very useful lines of road would be carried through a country, but for want of the power to pass through some very small portion of an individual county, which fancies its interests opposed to it, the whole measure has been defeated. There are cases where a shilling presentment has been refused in order to defeat the measure, and perhaps a very useful measure for the country. In such instances it would seem very desirable to have some powers to correct the evil. I have known instances of two counties presenting for a bridge, and if the plans of the two engineers employed had been followed, the two halves of the bridge would have been of different constructions and at different parts of the river."

543. "Can you suggest any scheme by which, when one party proposes to make a part of a general line of communication as far as it passes through that county, that an adjoining county could be compelled to continue such line through its territory?—With regard to roads, the only way it could be done is by a commission appointed by Government; Government officers, and gentlemen of a different part of the country, would perhaps be most satisfactory."

544. "Can you mention any instance within your own knowledge where such a provision as has been now suggested to you would be most desirable?—I can mention an instance where a road has been defeated for want of such a power. The Blessington turnpike trust has power to go to Carlow by a line which would be very advantageous to the country; but to carry it into execution it is necessary to pass through a small portion of the county of Kildare, whose Grand Jury have constantly refused to allow it, though only one shilling presentment was asked for; the consequence is, that a very improved communication from Dublin to Waterford, saving seven miles, is in a great measure defeated. There is another case where the county of Mayo has refused to carry on a great leading line of road, that would be very advantageous to the country in general, and which is already perfected up to the frontiers of that county."

On considering these important statements, Your Committee have no hesitation in suggesting that the Board of Works should be empowered to carry improved lines of roads through distinct counties, under regulations similar to those contained in the Act of 1834, for the erection of bridges connecting distinct counties; and Your Committee submit for the consideration of The House, whether the Act of 1834, for the repair of Mail Roads, might not be advantageously continued.

In cases where the entire charge of constructing the roads is to be borne by Government, it is considered but right that the Board of Works should have the power of undertaking and executing such Works, without reference to the Grand Jury.

In connexion with these suggestions, Your Committee beg further to state, that a useful power may be given to the Board, acting under the direction of the Government, of causing surveys to be made of lines of roads and other Public Works, for the purpose of suggesting improvements to Grand Juries and other public bodies; and in cases of applications

for loans, it is also suggested by Your Committee, that the Board of Works should send a surveyor in the first instance, for the purpose of avoiding the double expense of surveying, firstly, for the parties, and subsequently, for the Board, where a survey is not necessary for determining on the expediency of the Works, and where a deposit shall be made of a sufficient sum to pay for the survey. This recommendation Your Committee believe is to a great extent acted upon.

There is another object of great public importance to which Your Committee desire to recommend that the power of the Board of Works should be extended. By an Act of 1 & 2 Will. IV. c. 57, powers are given to undertakers, Grand Juries and individuals, for the reclamation and protection of lands on the banks of rivers and lakes, by sinking, embanking and removing obstructions; and these powers, though efficient and important, have not been carried into operation, from the want of enterprise, or want of confidence in persons to execute the Works; but were they conferred on the Board of Works, Your Committee are of opinion that the beneficial objects of the law would be speedily and safely accomplished: the interference of the Board to be called into operation by a requisition from the majority in value of the land proprietors interested; the Works to be completed under the direction of the Board; the benefit derived to each estate to be ascertained by a jury, and the charge of the Works to be allocated accordingly, becoming a lien on the land.

AS TO ROADS.

The formation of roads in Ireland, with the aid of Parliamentary grants, commenced in 1822; but in Scotland the formation of such roads was commenced in 1803. At present the Irish Board of Works is engaged in completing the construction of new roads in the districts of Mayo and Galway, but is not provided with funds for carrying them to an extent commensurate with the wants of the Western districts of Ireland, and the importance of such lines of communication to the Public, as they promote the improvement of the local population and enhance the resources of the revenue. The Board is also charged with the superintendence of the repair of Government roads in the counties of Clare, Cork, Galway, Kerry, Leitrim, Limerick, Mayo, Roscommon and Tipperary, extending, in all, to 381 miles (1004.), the expenditure on 334 of which, in 1834, amounted to £.5,255; and the whole charge is levied off the counties.

The Board of Works for Scotland (1 to 6.), constituted in 1803, for constructing roads and bridges in the uncultivated districts of that country, has constructed 874 miles of roads, and more than 1,000 bridges, and is now charged with superintending the repair of the roads thus formed, and of 300 miles of Government roads made in the same districts during the last century; for which repairs £.5,000 a year is paid out of the public revenue, as Your Committee have already observed, in aid of the sums raised by local taxation (50, 52, 81 and 111.) The local system of forming and maintaining roads in Scotland is very amply detailed in the Evidence of Mr. Loch, a Member of Your Committee, and in connexion with the prosecution of Public Works in Ireland, is particularly important.

Mr. Loch thus describes the effects produced in Scotland by the formation of the Government roads commenced in 1803:

203. "When I first became acquainted with the Highlands, the great proportion of the people, in place of being immediate tenants of the landlord, held of the different tacksmen. Since then almost all persons occupying land, and I do not confine my observations to Sutherland alone, though principally to it, have become

become immediate tenants to the landlord. They were extremely irregular in their habits, being poachers on the rivers and smugglers, and since then in Sutherland they have given up both, and have become most industrious workmen in every class of agricultural labour. It was necessary, at the period I mention, to get ploughmen from Elgin, and that side of the Moray Frith, and there was not a person who could build a stone wall, the ordinary mode of inclosing land in that country; but it is so much the reverse at the present moment, that almost every ploughman in the country is a native, and they are now the best builders of stone walls in the North, in consequence of which they are employed in all the adjoining counties. A great improvement has taken place also, arising from the greater extension of the English language. When the children on the coast-side formerly came out of school, though they were taught to read English in the school, they spoke nothing but the Gaelic language; now when they play after school hours on the coast-side, they all speak English. Nothing has tended so much to this as the institution of Gaelic schools, which were founded with the object of preserving that language; but the fact is, the moment persons have acquired the facility of reading Gaelic, they find it of no use, and immediately leave it, and teach themselves English.

204. "You say there were a kind of middle men when you first knew the country; how do you account for their being given up?—It was given up first of all from the feeling on the part of the landlord that it was his duty to have all persons on his estate holding immediately from himself; and from the change in the agriculture of the country, it was necessary that the tenant occupying the land should be freed from having his under tenants on the lands, which were then parcelled in what we call lots.

205. "Had the tacksmen leases?—They had all leases.

206. "How were they got out?—There were tenants at will under the middle men, and paid their rents under circumstances of the most grievous nature.

207. "Was it by an agreement between the tenant and the landlord that the middle men were got rid of?—At the termination of the lease the arrangement was always made to provide some situation for the lotters by the landlord, and then the farm was let to tacksmen, the lotters being otherwise provided for.

208. "You got them removed to other places?—We placed them in other places; sometimes a large farm was cut up, and each person got a portion of arable land to maintain himself, and then they were allowed to possess for 19 years, without paying any rent whatever, portions of land they brought into cultivation, in addition to such portion of arable land."

While on this part of the inquiry, Your Committee beg to call the attention of The House to a valuable Paper received from Mr. Scrope, a Member of the Committee, in which he proposes an allotment system to be resorted to for the protection of the poor occupiers of land along new lines of roads through unimproved tracts in Ireland. (*See Appendix*).

The outlay of the small grants heretofore made for those important Works in Ireland, have been productive of no less useful results than those described by Mr. Loch as having been obtained in Scotland; and Your Committee deem it advisable here to quote for the consideration of The House, the very apposite statements on the necessity and result of such works in Ireland, contained in the Report of the Select Committee of 1830, appointed to inquire into the condition of the Irish Poor, and other Public Reports before Your Committee.

"The fertile plains of Limerick, Cork and Kerry are separated from each other by a deserted country, hitherto nearly an impassable barrier. This large district comprehends upwards of 900 square miles; in many places it is very populous. As might be expected under such circumstances, the people are turbulent, and their houses being inaccessible for want of roads, it is not surprising that during the disturbances of 1821 and 1822 this district was the asylum for Whiteboys, smugglers and robbers, and that stolen cattle were drawn into it, as to a safe and impenetrable retreat. Notwithstanding its present desolate state, this country contains within itself the seeds of future improvement and industry." (*Griffith, in 1822.*)

Mr. Griffith reports on the *same* district, in 1829, after the execution of certain road works :

"A very considerable improvement has already taken place in the vicinity of the roads, both in the industry of the inhabitants, and the appearance of the country ; upwards of 60 new lime-kilns have been built ; carts, ploughs, harrows and improved implements have become common ; new houses of a better class have been built, new inclosures made, and the country has become perfectly tranquil, and exhibits a scene of industry and exertion at once pleasing and remarkable. A large portion of the money received for labour has been husbanded with care, laid out in building substantial houses, and in the purchase of stock and agricultural implements ; and numerous examples might be shown of poor labourers possessing neither money, houses nor land when first employed, who in the past year have been enabled to take farms, build houses, and stock their lands."

In a Report on a part of Kerry, Mr. Nimmo states, in 1824, that—

"A few years ago there was hardly a plough, car or carriage of any kind ; butter, the only produce, was carried to Cork on horseback ; there was not one decent public-house, and only one house slated and plastered in the village ; the nearest post-office 30 miles distant. Since the new road was made, there were built in three years upwards of 20 respectable two-story houses ; a shop with cloth, hardware and groceries ; a comfortable inn, a post-office, bridewell, new chapel, a quay covered with limestone for manure, a salt-work, two stores for oats, and a considerable traffic in linen and yarn."

Upon this subject the following communication has been made to us by Mr. O'Connell, a Member of the Committee.

"The place referred to by Mr. Nimmo is now called the town of Cahir Caveen. At the first period he alludes to, there was but one or two ploughs in the barony, or certainly only two cars. The quantity of wheat grown was confined to the consumption of a few families amongst the more wealthy classes, not exceeding six ; and oats were grown in but a little larger proportion.

"Since 1824, the date of Mr. Nimmo's Report, the houses in Cahir Caveen have increased from 20 to upwards of 250. There are several shops, and many persons engaged in the import and export trade. The inhabitants, in 1831, exceeded 1,100 ; they are now more than 1,300. There are from 10 to 15 new houses being built. A new and enlarged Bridewell, with a Petty Sessions Court, has been built. A well-supported dispensary, and a large and exceedingly well-regulated fever hospital, has been built outside the town, affording the greatest advantages to the poorer classes. There was no medical person resident in 1824 ; there is now a large and exceedingly well-supplied apothecary shop, and a skilful resident physician.

"The number of cars has multiplied so much, that the Writer has in a single day met upwards of 1,000 cars employed in various works in that country, in which he *knows* there were but two cars a few years ago.

"A bolting-mill has been erected near Cahir Caveen, at an expense of from £.4,000 to £.5,000 ; and the quantity of wheat grown in the country has multiplied more than 200-fold, and of oats more than 1,000-fold.

"All these advantages, and they are only beginning to develop themselves, have originated in the making of about 70 miles of new road on a level line."

Of a part of Mayo, Mr. Nimmo remarks, in 1829, on the improvements arising from a new line of road:—

"At Belmullet the advance is quite surprising ; the place only commenced four years ago ; it now consists of about 70 respectable houses, &c. Five ships were loaded with grain and kelp ; iron hoops and coal were imported ; spirits, beer and wine, British manufactures and tea and sugar were sold ; the produce of the fisheries were admitted to a market, and the population, formerly crowded in the narrow valleys, were fast settling along the new line of road."

A most important result is noticed in the same Report. In the district surrounding Clifden, in the county of Galway, no revenue was paid to the state prior to 1822. In 1826 taxation to the amount of £.2,500 was collected, and in 1828 it had augmented to £.6,080. 7. 3. :
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marking a consumption of spirits, tobacco, tea, sugar, &c. &c., and thus proving indisputably the increased wealth and improved habits of the people.

Mr. D'Arcy, in part of his evidence, makes the following statement respecting the same district.

1968. "Are there not in the County of Galway 200,000 acres of that description of land, and in a state almost waste, at this moment?—To the west of Galway there are more than 200,000 acres of land lying in that state.

1969. "How many have you of your own?—Several thousands.

1970. "How many are there in the neighbourhood immediately adjoining your estate?—The entire of the reclaimable district I alluded to is in the neighbourhood and adjoins my estate.

1971. "With reference to almost every part of that tract of land, do the facilities with respect to sea manure and lime exist?—The country is so indented by the sea, that the remotest part is not more than six miles from it; if, therefore, there were roads, the facilities would exist to every part.

1972. "Have not Government made a considerable length of road in that district?—They have commenced several, none of which are as yet completed.

1973. "Have not those roads remained for several years with one part finished and the other utterly impassable?—They have.

1974. "How long have they been left in that state?—They commenced in the year 1822, and are yet unfinished.

1975. "Is there one passable?—Not throughout.

1976. "Has not the improvement in that part of the country been very great?—Yes, the improvement of that country has been very great within the last 10 or 12 years; for instance, where you could scarcely get a stone of oats in 1822, from the quantity of waste land brought into cultivation, there was exported from the town of Clifden, this year, 800 tons to London and Liverpool.

1977. "To what do you attribute the increase of cultivation?—Partly to the building of the town, and partly to the outlay of money on the roads, and the facilities afforded by them even in their imperfect state.

1978. "Were oats grown in that country before?—Very little corn was grown in that country prior to the building of the town, there being no market for it.

1997. "If there was a main line of road made through the district, would the proprietors be able to make roads that would join it so as to be useful?—I think if the main lines were completed, the inhabitants of the barony would make some private roads by getting a loan of money, and paying the interest and principal by small instalments; the principal roads they are unable to make."

2013. "When you first went to reside in that country, how many houses were there in the village of Clifden?—Only one.

2014. "How many are there now?—Upwards of 300.

2015. "How many years ago is it since you went there?—Twenty years ago, in the year 1815.

2016. "Was there any revenue receivable from Clifden or its neighbourhood at that time?—Not a shilling.

2017. "Can you state the amount of revenue received last year?—Upwards of £.7,000.

2018. "Does illicit distillation still prevail in Connemara?—It does not; there is a party of Revenue Police who are very active to prevent it.

2019. "Are they sufficient to put it down?—They are.

2020. "Previous to the formation of roads, was there much illicit distillation at Connemara?—There was a great deal.

2021. "If the country was more open by roads, would it be necessary to keep up so large a police for the purpose of suppressing illicit distillation?—It would not."

In further proof of the advantages accruing to the public Revenue in Ireland, by the opening of roads through the hitherto uncultivated parts of the country, Your Committee refer to a paper in the Appendix, received from Mr. Mahony.

Mr. Williams states, that—

"In consequence of the expenditure of £.160,000 in public works in Connaught in seven years, the increase of the annual revenue has been equal to the whole of
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that expenditure." "I find also," he adds, "a corresponding increase in the revenue of the Cork district, where Mr. Griffith expended £.60,000 in seven years, and the increase of Customs and Excise has been £.50,000 a year, attributable mainly to the facilities of communication by which whole districts have been rendered available for productive purposes, and a miserable pauper population converted into a class of consumers."

Again, in another statement:—

"The Customs and Excise of Galway have fully doubled since 1822, and exclusive of the improvement in Mayo and Sligo, the surplus must have gone far to pay off the sums Government have expended since that period in the province.

The Committee of 1830 adds, that—

"The effects produced by these public works appear to have been,—extended cultivation, improved habits of industry, a better administration of justice, the re-establishment of peace and tranquillity in disturbed districts, a domestic colonization of a population in excess in certain districts, a diminution of illicit distillation, and a very considerable increase to the Revenue."

In the Reports of the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland, 1833, 1834 and 1835, it is stated.—

"The very great benefit which the country has derived from the formation of these roads has been repeatedly represented; nothing however short of witnessing the effects produced can give an adequate impression of their value.

"In traversing a country covered with farms and in a high state of cultivation, showing every sign of a good soil and of amply remunerating produce, it becomes difficult to credit the fact, that 10 or 12 years since the whole was a barren waste, the asylum of a miserable and lawless peasantry, who were calculated to be a burden rather than a benefit to the nation; and that this improvement may entirely be attributed to the expenditure of a few thousand pounds in carrying a good road of communication through the district.

"These and other advantages however are insufficient to lead to the execution of such works without the direct and leading support of Government. Some, no doubt, have been constructed by parties feeling a paramount interest in the undertaking, and possessing adequate resources. Small tracts of land capable of improvement may thus be opened by the proprietors, but few individuals know where or how to begin on an extensive range of country, where the operations and results must necessarily be on a great scale, and where the interests are so multiplied and blended, and the relative anticipated advantages so little within the reach of calculation, that even interested parties cannot be induced to venture on the speculation.

"It might reasonably be expected that the Grand Juries would provide a remedy in such cases; but those are naturally the poorest counties in which these unproductive districts abound, and it is with difficulty they can maintain the communications already established. They have the greatest wants and the smallest means, and the remote wastes attract little of their attention."

On a most beneficial class of works, undertaken by Government aid, namely, the small fishery piers on the coast, it is remarked:—

"These piers appear to have been productive of great advantages to the neighbouring districts, not only as affording encouragement to the fisheries, but also accommodation for the landing and shipment of produce, goods, manure, &c., on which considerations they seem to merit the attention of Government."

"The shelter these small piers afford to fishery vessels, and those employed in the distribution of manure and fuel, together with the facility they offer for the transmission of agricultural produce, has created in their immediate vicinity a striking contrast to the wild uncultivated wastes by which they are in many instances surrounded."

Towards the conclusion of the Second, the Report adds:—

"It is not for this Board to give an opinion on the degree of support which the Legislature should bestow on Public Works of primary utility. We are, however, fully persuaded not only of the great political advantage of such an expenditure of the public money, but that it would be to a considerable extent repaid by

by the indirect returns made to the Revenue arising from an increased general prosperity. In England abundant sources of industry are struggling for vent, requiring only the stimulus of such additional facilities of intercourse to enable them to come into full and immediate operation. They are, therefore, in themselves fair sources of speculation for private capital. In Ireland, on the contrary, they are required to foster and encourage sources of industry which are yet latent; and though the consequences and advantages are not so immediately apparent, nor (except in a few instances) do they afford *direct* profits to induce the expenditure of private capital, they are not the less great objects of national interest."

The following are from the Third Report, 1835:—

"The benefits which the country has derived from the construction of roads carried by the aid of Government contributions through extensive poor uncultivated districts, which were previously without means of communication, continue to manifest themselves in the most satisfactory manner.

"These roads have been the means of fertilizing the deserts, and of depriving the lawless disturbers of the public peace of their place of refuge, affording them at the same time resources for an active, honest industry, of which we must do them the justice to observe, they have not shown any indisposition to avail themselves."... "We cannot lose the opportunity of repeating the declaration of our firm conviction of the good policy of promoting these eminently useful works by the most liberal and extensive support."

Your Committee, impressed with the important national results detailed in these Reports, and desirous of extending them generally through all the uncultivated tracts of Ireland, present to the consideration of The House the following extracts from the Evidence of Colonel Burgoyne:—

455. "Where would you apply the Government money?—In opening very extensive uncultivated districts; I would provide one main thoroughfare of communication at the expense of Government, and for opening less extensive districts I would give the moiety grants as at present; for those occasions they work very well.

456. "Do you include great tracts of bog in your improvable districts?—Yes, bogs and mountain land.

457. "Would it not be right to compel the landlord to contribute?—I think not in the cases of those very extensive districts I referred to; they have no sufficient interest in it; the great benefit derived from opening those lines of roads would be to the lower classes for many years, and it would be only a distant prospective advantage that the landlord would have in them.

458. "Would not the people themselves be willing to contribute?—The people who would derive the principal benefit have no means of doing so, the poor people.

459. "There is their labour?—You cannot have people's gratuitous labour who have nothing else to live on.

460. "Did you ever hear of one-half of the estimated rate per perch being given to the people who executed the work, in consideration of the local advantage they derived from it?—I have; and in such a case the road might be constructed at a moderate expense, very beneficially to the country.

461. "Is this generally applicable to the state of the country with reference to the people's contribution?—I think in some cases it is made the subject of oppression, by taking advantage of their necessities to get out of them their labour at a low rate."

462. "What are the principal lines of communication which you think it would be most desirable to make with reference to the unfolding the resources of the country?—I cannot specify the particular lines; but the districts generally of Galway, Mayo and Clare, and I believe parts of Donegal; Mayo in particular.

463. "Have you taken into consideration the districts adjoining the counties of Kerry, Limerick and Cork?—All these counties also are very susceptible of improvement in that way."

526. "What are the number of miles of general lines of roads of great and pressing importance which you think desirable to be immediately made, and what would be an approximation to the expense?—I should think at a rough guess, that 200 miles would not be saying too much.

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527. "What would be the probable expense?—The probable expense might be 120,000*l.*, about 600*l.* a mile perhaps.

528. "And is this the whole extent of the great lines of communication which you would contemplate making out of the public funds?—It would go beyond it.

529. "How much beyond?—I have not made a correct calculation; it would require some researches with reference to that particular object. I gave too precise an answer when I said 200 miles; there are at least 100 miles in Galway and Mayo alone that might be made with very good effect."

AS TO FUTURE LOANS.

After four years' experience of the working of the Act, Your Committee feel themselves authorized in stating, that although strict in many of its terms, it has been of much and essential service to Ireland. Your Committee, however, beg leave to observe, That the prescribed terms are so severe for individuals, only three or four Loans have been taken; and even in respect of public bodies Loans which might have been safely made and most usefully applied, could not be obtained under the Act, (Colonel Burgoyne.) And it is in evidence before Your Committee, that in consequence of the strictness of the terms on which Loans are required to be made by the present Act (355 to 369, 374, 394, 349 to 360, 573, 587, 826, 909, 988, 1013, 1035, 1051, 1067, 1225.) the benefits which might flow from them under less restrictions, yet with equal safety to the Loan Fund, have not been diffused commensurately with the objects for profitable outlay, to which the fund was originally designed to be applied.

It also appears that the rate of Interest chargeable on the Loans, as stated at the commencement of this Report, is considered high with reference to the cost of the Loans to Government, the nature of the objects for which the Loans are required, and the present general rate of interest on money. (398, 402, 650 to 658, 909, 988, 1001, 1018, 1018, 1059 to 1063, 1066, 1083.)

Your Committee find, from the experience of the Loan system introduced into England under the Commissioners for Loans in 1817, that the best possible effects have been produced. By the Evidence of Mr. Brickwood, it appears that since the year 1817, the sum of £.5,300,000 has been advanced by the English Loan Commissioners on the security of Roads and other Public Works in England, and nearly £.200,000 in Ireland, out of the £.250,000, the sum provided by that Act for Ireland.

Previously to the issuing of Exchequer Bills under the present Act, (which is a revolving fund, the issue of Exchequer Bills being always to be available to the amount of £.500,000) a sum of £.500,000 has been from time to time appropriated (and which was advanced out of the Consolidated Fund) for similar Loans in Ireland, under the authority of various Acts of Parliament.*

Of the £.5,300,000 advanced in England, the sum of £.2,000,000 is now and has been outstanding at an average rate of interest of £.4. 2. 6. per cent., whilst Government, after the first year of issue, only pay an interest of 2½ per cent.; so that the gain to Government is nearly £.40,000 a year, and although the Commissioners in England are not in the receipt of the interest on the whole sum outstanding, after allowing for all expenditure,

* These sums are exclusive of the monies lent by Government to Grand Juries in Ireland, for the building of Gaols, Court-houses and Infirmarys, and which are either actually paid or in the progress of repayment.

diture, there is an annual sum of £.30,000 received by Government, over and above all losses which have occurred.

In proportion to the amount, an annual Surplus must have arisen, and must continue to arise, upon the sum of £.500,000 issued under the present Act.

It is also in evidence, that the operation of the 18th and 48th Sections already referred to, have very much deterred persons from borrowing money under the Act, or becoming sureties for others, or shareholders in useful undertakings; and it appears to Your Committee, that if the security was taken to the Commissioners without making the party entering into the security a Crown debtor, the same if not greater security would be afforded, as persons would be more likely to become sureties. And in reference to the 48th Section, it appears to Your Committee that the precautions taken by the Board as to security would admit of some relaxation in the rigour of this clause.

It is also in evidence (Colonel Burgoyne, 1125 to 1133.), that the present Loan Fund, or power of issuing Exchequer Bills to the amount of £.500,000 to lend for Irish Public Works, is inadequate for the wants of Ireland; and it is recommended that the Fund be increased.

A loan has been made by the Commissioners in England to the Ulster Canal Company, at the rate of $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent.

Under the present Act, 25 years are given for the repayment of loans for Public Works; interest at £.4 per cent. is required, and a sinking fund of £.4 per cent.

It appears to Your Committee that in order to lighten the pressure upon the resources of the borrowers at the commencement of their undertakings, the sum required for the repayment of the principal, together with the interest, should be fixed and invariable throughout the entire time for which the money is lent. It is in evidence (see Appendix, the Evidence of Mr. Mahony) that a fixed payment of £.6 per cent. continued through a period of 29 years will pay an interest of £.4 per cent. on the sum advanced, and pay off the entire principal. If the interest was reduced, the principal money would of course be sooner repaid by means of this fixed payment.

Your Committee, after mature deliberation on the Evidence obtained under these important heads of their Inquiry, beg leave to recommend to the consideration of The House,—

1. THAT the Loan Fund be increased by a power of issuing Exchequer Bills for an additional sum, which, together with the £.500,000 already granted, shall be a revolving Fund for annual outlay in Loans.

2. THAT the Lords of the Treasury shall have power to reduce the rate of Interest payable upon the Loans to any rate not lower than the cost to Government.

3. THAT in respect of Loans to individuals, except in case of a Loan on personal security only, the repayments be a period of time varying from seven to fifteen years; the first repayment to commence at the furthest, at the expiration of five years from the commencement of the Loan.

4. THAT in respect of Loans for all Public Works, except Loans to Grand Juries, the repayments be made by half-yearly instalments at the annual rate of £.6 per cent. on the original amount, out of which the interest is to be deducted at the rate agreed upon.

5. THAT the Shares and Stock of all such Public Companies as shall be approved by the Treasury, may be taken as Securities, as well as Government and Bank Stock, Exchequer Bills and India Bonds.

6. THAT power be given to the Lords of the Treasury to enlarge the time for repayment on the agreement for the Loan.

7. THAT the writing obligatory required by the 18th Section of the Act be given at the discretion of the Lords of the Treasury, either to His Majesty as thereby directed, or to the Secretary of the Commissioners, so as to relieve the party from becoming a Crown Debtor.

8. THAT power be given to the Lords of the Treasury, if they shall think fit, to dispense at the time of the contract for the Loan with the obligation contained in the 48th Section.

Your Committee having received several suggestions, recommending that the loans borrowed from the Board of Works should be first charges on the estates improved, taking priority of all previous incumbrances, inasmuch as by the outlay of the loans the estates would be enhanced in value, they are desirous of calling the attention of The House to the recommendation, without offering one on their own part; but they suggest whether, in the event of its not being considered politic to adopt the recommendation, it would not be just to make the loan a first charge on the particular portion of the estate reclaimed or improved by the outlay of it.

Your Committee also beg leave to call the attention of The House to a provision in the French law, whereby it is directed that previously to the commencement of improvement of waste lands, such waste lands should be valued, and the claim of the mortgagee or incumbrancer on that portion of the estate is limited to the amount of the valuation.

It has also been suggested, and to which suggestion Your Committee beg leave to call the attention of The House, that to relieve borrowers from a portion of the expenses attending on the completion of Securities, the Solicitor of the Board of Works should be empowered to require the Officers of the Irish Courts, and of the Registry Office, to make searches for Incumbrances and Settlements affecting the properties on which Securities shall be offered; and that such Officers shall not require any fee or duty for such searches: the searches in those cases to be retained in the Office of the Board of Works, and used only for official purposes.

It has also been recommended to Your Committee, that the regulations of the Act as to loans might be relaxed in favour of tenants for life, or other persons having particular estates, so as to enable them to charge the outlay on the inheritance, as in cases of grants, (1043, 1054 to 1059.) where they are empowered to charge on the inheritance a moiety of the contribution for roads and bridges. Your Committee recommend that this power be given, but with the sanction of the Court of Chancery to be obtained previously to the making of the contract, by petition in a summary way, and the outlay in no case to exceed three years' annual value of the estate. On the repayment of such loans, the tenant for life, or other person having a particular estate, to have a lien on the inheritance for the amount repaid out of the rents and profits accrued due during the continuance of such life or particular estate. This principle is recognized by the law of Scotland; in England, by the Inclosure Acts; and in Ireland, by the Acts for encouraging the planting of trees.

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Your Committee cannot leave this part of their inquiries without strongly expressing their opinion, that the maximum of interest receivable by the Commissioners of Public Works should be £. 4 per cent.

AS TO FUTURE GRANTS.

Your Committee have already stated that the Grant Fund provided by the Act, amounting to £.50,000, to be disposed of in contributions of a moiety of the expense of constructing roads through waste tracts in remote districts, and small fishery piers on distant parts of the coast, has been nearly exhausted, and, as it appears, chiefly by aids to Grand Juries. Only a small part has been obtained by individuals (468.) It has been strongly urged that an additional Grant be applied for similar objects, as well as for useful Public Works of any description (469.); and as Moiety Grants in aid of undertakings by individuals, where no direct tolls or profits would arise; and also for the whole expense of works in remote poor districts, where a moiety of the expense could not be obtained either from individuals or public bodies (1137 to 1149.), and in completing the roads already commenced by Government, but which remain in an unfinished state, and whereby the greater part of the advantages to the public are lost.

Your Committee beg leave also to state, that scarcity and distress most frequently occur in those districts where there is a deficiency of roads and means of communication. Such is the case at the present moment.

Your Committee, in reference to the extension of roads, have already pointed to the extraordinary advantages which have been obtained by an expenditure of public money in the carrying on of works through the remote districts of Ireland.

In Scotland, similar results followed similar operations—(Mr. Loch, 151 and 203.); and in that country, grants were made for roads and bridges, from 1803 to 1821, both inclusive, amounting to £.492,670. 10. 5.

Looking to the amount of outlay in Scotland, and the advantages which have flowed from the former, as well those which have been obtained by a much smaller outlay in Ireland, Your Committee recommend that an additional sum be placed at the disposal of the Irish Board of Works, to be expended on all works of public utility, where no private profit shall arise, and where public bodies or individuals shall contribute one-half of the expense. Your Committee also recommend to the consideration of The House, whether similar powers should not be conferred on tenants for life, trustees and other persons, having only particular estates, in reference to the construction of small piers, quays and harbours, as by the present Act are given in respect of roads and bridges, for enabling them to raise their moiety of contribution; and also whether the stipulation required, as to the future maintenance and repair of such small piers, quays and harbours, may not safely be dispensed with, particularly if the recommendation of Your Committee, contained in a former part of this Report, as to Tolls, be adopted; and also whether the stipulations as to the person or persons who shall apply for such moiety, entering into security to defray all monies beyond the estimated expense should not be confined to one-half of such increased expenditure. The same remark is applicable as to Grand Juries; and Your Committee beg leave also to suggest, that no compensation should be given for the lands taken for roads or bridges through any wild or remote districts.

AS TO THE EXECUTION OF PUBLIC WORKS.

Your Committee recommend, that all Works for which a Grant shall be made, or for which the *whole* cost shall be lent, be executed under the sole direction of the Board: and that when a Grand Jury shall contribute towards the expense of a work, it should appoint a Committee to communicate with the Board before making a final presentment for the contribution; and the Board should be required to furnish the Grand Jury with a full account of the expenditure, on the completion of the Works.

Your Committee also recommend, that the labourers and workmen employed should be paid weekly, as far as circumstances will allow; and that in the case of contracts, the Board of Works should stipulate with the contractors that the wages of the labourers and workmen should be paid weekly.

SMALL PIERS, QUAYS AND HARBOURS.

The power of the Irish Board of Works for aiding in the construction of small piers, quays and harbours, is confined by the present Act to the sea-coast; and grants for such objects are limited to £.1,000 for one work. (472 to 475.) It has been recommended to the Committee that it would be very advantageous to the country were this power extended to available localities along navigable rivers and lakes. On this object the Committee beg to refer to the Evidence of Mr. Charles Wye Williams. And for the means of constructing these desirable works, necessary for protecting the fisheries and facilitating and extending inland trade, Your Committee recommend that Grand Juries should have the power (not now possessed by them) of presenting for a moiety of the cost of such works, to be levied off the district in which they would be situated, (476 & 850.) but the levy not to exceed the amount of the utmost grant which the Board of Works is authorized to make in aid of them, viz. £.1,000. With respect to the question of Tolls (689, 691, 712 to 723, 959 to 965,) proposed by some of the Witnesses to be levied for the maintenance of such works, it appears to Your Committee, that for the purposes of maintenance and protection, small tolls may be usefully imposed on such works; and that the Board of Works should be authorized to lease such tolls. The lessee to be bound also to protect the works; and that no tolls should be levied unless approved by the Board of Works, such tolls being previously fixed and published.

SAFETY HARBOURS.

On the coast of Ireland there are numerous eligible sites for Safety Harbours, where an outlay of no very great amount, comparatively with its advantages, would be sufficient to render those natural asylums secure havens for Commercial Shipping; but where there is no prospect of pecuniary profit to induce an outlay by individuals or companies;—and there, Your Committee beg leave to call the attention of The House to the Evidence on this point, showing that a national outlay for suitable defences at such stations, and for removing dangerous rocks and making navigable certain passes or straits between the main land and contiguous islands, would be of great importance to the Shipping and Insurance interests of Great Britain, while promoting local benefits in Ireland, by affording employment and encouraging the deep-sea fisheries.

INLAND NAVIGATION AND RAIL-ROADS.

Under the present Act, the Board of Works cannot make *Grants* for improving the Navigation of Rivers, but may lend for all Public Works.

It has been suggested, that for the purpose of improving the navigation of Rivers and Lakes, or extending Canals, it would be politic, whenever individuals shall subscribe a *contribution of one-fourth* of the estimated charge, or the lands benefited shall be made liable to *one-fourth* of this charge, that Government shall contribute another *fourth*, and that the remaining *half* shall be lent by the Board of Works, to be repayable by half-yearly instalments, at an average rate of 6 per cent. on the loan, in which the accruing interest on the loan is to be included; these repayments to be raised by tolls terminable on the extinction of the debt, or by other approved means. In all such undertakings, the Government would require to be satisfied that the tolls of the navigations would provide for the repayment of the loan, and that the cost would not exceed the estimates; otherwise, of course, the proposed contribution would not be made. Your Committee therefore recommend this suggestion to the consideration of The House; it being obvious that there cannot be an improvident outlay under such limitations, and that Navigations, so formed, must become of great local or even national importance.

Looking, however, to the condition of Ireland, Your Committee foresee that undertakings of the kind must be very limited when individuals (either subscribers or proprietors) must bear *one-fourth* of the cost; and they beg leave to suggest that other measures should be resorted to for improving extensive lines of inland navigation. For this object, they consider that it would be sound policy to make a liberal outlay of public money, as the advantages to be obtained are equal in national importance to any for which the public money is applied, next to the maintenance of the Government. And they recommend that it shall be the duty of the Board of Works, under the sanction of the Treasury in each case, to investigate the expediency and estimate the expense of all such improvements, on the requisition of Grand Juries or Baronial Sessions, and report to Government the probable advantages and cost of the required Works; each Report to be laid before Parliament previously to the time for considering the Estimates of the year.

Whether Your Committee consider the extension of Canals as a means for facilitating internal intercourse, (and to Canals all the previous observations on Roads are strictly applicable,) or as one of the best means of draining and improving bogs and wastes, whether as an abundant source of employment for the poor, not merely in their construction, but to a far greater extent after their completion, or with reference to the vast sums already invested, and in which Government are directly interested to a very considerable extent, they are strongly impressed with its importance as one of the most powerful agents of national improvement.

The introduction of Railways, if practicable, would also be attended by so many obviously important advantages, that the Committee do not hesitate to class them with Canals, as works of primary importance.

One of the principal objects of the Loan system, and of the present Act, was to encourage the application of private capital and enterprise in promoting public works of this class, and Your Committee attach much importance to the operation of private capital and public credit, in promoting works of this class, where the parties who originate the undertaking and by whom it is to be managed, have a direct personal interest in its prosperity, and give the best possible evidence of the sincerity of their views, by contributing a large portion of the cost.

It has been suggested to Your Committee, that in such cases and for such objects, where the parties offer to advance one-third of the actual cost of the undertaking, the Board of Works should be authorized to advance the remaining two-thirds, one-third to be repaid with interest in the usual manner, and the remainder as a grant; in this case the Company to be restricted from dividing a greater amount of profit than 10 per cent. per annum until they paid off the amount of the Grant as well as the Loan.

A modification of this plan has been suggested by Mr. Cubitt, namely, that of the two-thirds proposed to be advanced by the Board of Works, one-half should be secured upon the work, to be repaid by an annual charge of five per cent. for 31 years, which is equivalent to paying three per cent. interest and investing two per cent. as a sinking fund, and that whatever profit shall arise from the work over and above five per cent. per annum during the repayment of the first part of the Loan, shall go to the Company, and that so soon as the first part of the public Loan shall thus be paid off, the *entire surplus*, over and above five per cent. per annum on the private advance, shall then be applied to the repayment of the second part of the public Loan, but without interest; after which the entire profit may be divided by the Company.

This plan appears to deserve attention, inasmuch as it establishes a mutual interest between the lender and the borrower, as the latter can never enjoy the full amount of his profits while the former remains unpaid; and as likely to bring forward a large amount of private capital in furtherance of Public Works of great national utility as well as emolument, and thus confer benefits on Ireland which neither public nor private capital separately employed could ever accomplish.

On the general principle of improving, or opening, inland Navigations, particularly as it applies to the Shannon and its tributary rivers, Your Committee have received much useful information from Colonel Burgoyne, and Mr. C. W. Williams, one of the Directors of the Dublin Steam Packet Company (506; 536 to 542; 834; 941 to 965.), and they consider the suggestions of those gentlemen worthy of the most serious consideration.

WASTE LANDS.

Your Committee reserve for a further Report the recommendations which they propose to found on the evidence they have taken, and are obtaining, in relation to the reclaiming of the Irish Waste Lands; and they will in that Report apply themselves to the consideration of various suggestions before them, as to the best means of improving the condition of Ireland generally, by promoting the employment of the people throughout the country. For the present, they are desirous of calling the immediate attention of The House to the objects included in this Report, as the ordinary wants of the labouring population in the districts principally referred to, are now seriously increased by the scarcity and dearness of Potatoes, on which the peasantry there exclusively subsist; and it is desirable that any proposed measures for enlarging the operations of the Board of Works, in those parts of the country, be speedily adopted.

June 1835.